

SB 1.1: Questions by the Sages

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

जन्माद्यस्य यतोऽन्वयादितरतश्चार्थेष्वभिज्ञः स्वराट्

तेने ब्रह्म हृदा य आदिकवये मुद्यन्ति यत्सूरयः ।

तेजोवारिमृदां यथा विनिमयो यत्र त्रिसर्गोऽमृषा

धाम्ना स्वेन सदा निरस्तकुहकं सत्यं परं धीमहि ॥ १ ॥

*om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya
janmādy asya yato 'nvayād itarataś cārtheṣv abhijñāḥ svarāṭ
tene brahma hṛdā ya ādi-kavaye muhyanti yat sūrayaḥ
tejo-vāri-mṛdāṁ yathā vinimayo yatra tri-sargo 'mṛṣā
dhāmnā svena sadā nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhīmahi*

TRANSLATION

O my Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, son of Vasudeva, O all-pervading Personality of Godhead, I offer my respectful obeisances unto You. I meditate upon Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa because He is the Absolute Truth and the primeval cause of all causes of the creation, sustenance and destruction of the manifested universes. He is directly and indirectly conscious of all manifestations, and He is independent because there is no other cause beyond Him. It is He only who first imparted the Vedic knowledge unto the heart of Brahmājī, the original living being. By Him even the great sages and demigods are placed into illusion, as one is bewildered by the illusory representations of water seen in fire, or land seen on water. Only because of Him do the material universes, temporarily manifested by the reactions of the three modes of nature, appear factual, although they are unreal. I therefore meditate upon Him, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is eternally existent in the transcendental abode, which is forever free from the illusory representations of the material world. I meditate upon Him, for He is the

Absolute Truth.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. This work is described by Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya as the spotless *Purāṇa* because it contains the transcendental narration of the Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The history of the Śrimad-Bhāgavatam is also very glorious. It was compiled by Śrī Vyāsadeva after he had attained maturity in transcendental knowledge. He wrote this under the instructions of Śrī Nāradajī, his spiritual master. Vyāsadeva compiled all Vedic literatures, containing the four divisions of the Vedas, the *Vedānta-sūtras* (or the *Brahma-sūtras*), the *Purāṇas*, the *Mahābhārata*, and so on. But nevertheless he was not satisfied. His dissatisfaction was observed by his spiritual master, and thus Nārada advised him to write on the transcendental activities of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa. These transcendental activities are described specifically in the *Bhāgavatam*'s Tenth Canto, which is considered its substance. But in order to reach the very substance one must proceed gradually by developing knowledge of the categories.
2. Some Māyāvādī scholars argue that Śrimad-Bhāgavatam was not compiled by Śrī Vyāsadeva. And some of them suggest that this book is a modern creation written by someone named Vopadeva. In order to refute such meaningless arguments, Śrī Śrīdhara Svāmī points out that there is reference to the *Bhāgavatam* in many of the oldest *Purāṇas*.
3. This first *śloka* of the *Bhāgavatam* begins with the *Gāyatrī* mantra. There is reference to this in the *Matsya Purāṇa*, which is the oldest *Purāṇa*. In that *Purāṇa* it is said about the *Bhāgavatam* that in it there are many narrations of spiritual instructions, that it begins with the *Gāyatrī* mantra, and that it contains the history of Vṛtrāsura. Anyone who makes a gift of this great work on a full moon day attains to the highest perfection of life by returning to Godhead. There is reference to the *Bhāgavatam* in other *Purāṇas* also, where it is clearly stated that this work was finished in twelve cantos, which include eighteen thousand *ślokas*.
4. In the *Padma Purāṇa* also there is reference to the *Bhāgavatam* in a conversation between Gautama and Mahārāja Ambarīṣa. The king was advised therein to read regularly Śrimad-Bhāgavatam if he desired liberation from material bondage. Under the circumstances, there is no

doubt about the authority of the *Bhāgavatam*.

5. Within the past five hundred years, many erudite scholars and ācāryas like Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Vallabhācārya, and many other distinguished scholars even after the time of Lord Caitanya made elaborate commentaries on the *Bhāgavatam*. And the serious student would do well to attempt to go through them to better relish the transcendental messages.
6. This Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam will gradually elevate the unbiased reader to the highest perfectional stage of transcendence. It will enable him to transcend the three modes of material activities: fruitive actions, speculative philosophy, and worship of functional deities as inculcated in Vedic verses.

TEXT 2

धर्मः प्रोज्जितकैतवोऽत्र परमो निर्मत्सराणां सतां

वेद्यं वास्तवमत्र वस्तु शिवदं तापत्रयोन्मूलनम् ।

श्रीमद्भागवते महामुनिकृते किं वा परैरीश्वरः

सद्यो हृद्यवरुद्ध्यतेऽत्र कृतिभिः शुश्रूभिस्तत्क्षणात् ॥ २ ॥

*dharmaḥ projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇāṁ satāṁ
vedyam vāstavam atra vastu śivadam tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte kiṁ vā parair iśvarah
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ śuśrūṣubhis tat-kṣanāt*

SYNONYMS

dharmaḥ—religiosity; *projjhita*—completely rejected; *kaitavaḥ*—covered by fruitive intention; *atra*—herein; *paramaḥ*—the highest; *nirmatsarāṇām*—of the one-hundred-percent pure in heart; *satām*—devotees; *vedyam*—understandable; *vāstavam*—factual; *atra*—herein; *vastu*—substance; *śivadam*—well-being; *tāpa-traya*—threefold miseries; *unmūlanam*—causing uprooting of; *śrīmat*—beautiful; *bhāgavate*—the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*; *mahā-muni*—the great

sage (Vyāsadeva); *kṛte*—having compiled; *kim*—what is; *vā*—the need; *paraiḥ*—others; *īśvaraḥ*—the Supreme Lord; *sadyaḥ*—at once; *hṛdi*—within the heart; *avarudhyate*—becomes compact; *atra*—herein; *kṛtibhiḥ*—by the pious men; *śuśrūṣubhiḥ*—by culture; *tat-kṣaṇāt*—without delay.

TRANSLATION

Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhāgavata Purāṇa propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart. The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all. Such truth uproots the threefold miseries. This beautiful Bhāgavatam, compiled by the great sage Vyāsadeva [in his maturity], is sufficient in itself for God realization. What is the need of any other scripture? As soon as one attentively and submissively hears the message of the Bhāgavatam, by this culture of knowledge the Supreme Lord is established within his heart.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The proper method for receiving this transcendental message is to hear it submissively. A challenging attitude cannot help one realize this transcendental message. One particular word is used herein for proper guidance. This word is *śuśrūṣu*. One must be anxious to hear this transcendental message. The desire to sincerely hear is the first qualification.
2. Less fortunate persons are not at all interested in hearing this Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The process is simple, but the application is difficult. Unfortunate people find enough time to hear idle social and political conversations, but when invited to attend a meeting of devotees to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam they suddenly become reluctant, or they indulge in hearing the portion of the Bhāgavatam they are unfit to hear.
3. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is meant to be heard from the beginning. Those who are fit to assimilate this work are mentioned in this śloka: "One becomes qualified to hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam after many pious deeds."
4. The intelligent person, with thoughtful discretion, can be assured by the great sage Vyāsadeva that he can realize the Supreme Personality directly

by hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Without undergoing the different stages of realization set forth in the Vedas, one can be lifted immediately to the position of paramahāmsa simply by agreeing to receive this message.

TEXT 3

निगमकल्पतरोर्गलितं फलं शुकमुखादमृतद्रवसंयुतम् ।

पिबत भागवतं रसमालयं मुहुरहो रसिका भुवि भावुकाः ॥ ३ ॥

*nigama-kalpa-taror galitam phalam
śuka-mukhād amṛta-drava-samyutam
piibata bhāgavatam rasam ā-layam
muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ*

SYNONYMS

nigama—the Vedic literatures; *kalpa-taroh*—the desire tree; *galitam*—fully matured; *phalam*—fruit; *śuka*—Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the original speaker of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam; *mukhāt*—from the lips of; *amṛta*—nectar; *drava*—semisolid and soft and therefore easily swallowable; *samyutam*—perfect in all respects; *pibata*—do relish it; *bhāgavatam*—the book dealing in the science of the eternal relation with the Lord; *rasam*—juice (that which is relishable); *ā-layam*—until liberation, or even in a liberated condition; *muhuḥ*—always; *aho*—O; *rasikāḥ*—those who are full in the knowledge of mellows; *bhuvi*—on the earth; *bhāvukāḥ*—expert and thoughtful.

TRANSLATION

O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. It emanated from the lips of Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī. Therefore this fruit has become even more tasteful, although its nectarean juice was already relishable for all, including liberated souls.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. In the two previous *ślokas* it has been definitely proved that the Śrīmad-

Bhāgavatam is the sublime literature which surpasses all other Vedic scriptures due to its transcendental qualities. It is transcendental to all mundane activities and mundane knowledge. In this *śloka* it is stated that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not only a superior literature but is the ripened fruit of all Vedic literatures.

2. In other words, it is the cream of all Vedic knowledge. Considering all this, patient and submissive hearing is definitely essential. With great respect and attention, one should receive the message and lessons imparted by the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.
3. In this *śloka*, it is definitely stated that spiritual *rasa*, which is relished even in the liberated stage, can be experienced in the literature of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* due to its being the ripened fruit of all Vedic knowledge. By submissively hearing this transcendental literature, one can attain the full pleasure of his heart's desire. But one must be very careful to hear the message from the right source.
4. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is exactly received from the right source because it was brought by Nārada Muni from the spiritual world and given to his disciple Śrī Vyāsadeva. The latter in turn delivered the message to his son Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī delivered the message to Mahārāja Parīkṣit during the seven days before the King's death.
5. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was a liberated soul from his very birth. He was liberated even in the womb of his mother, and he did not undergo any sort of spiritual training after his birth. At birth no one is qualified, neither in the mundane nor in the spiritual sense. But Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī, due to his being a perfectly liberated soul, did not have to undergo an evolutionary process for spiritual realization. Yet despite his being a completely liberated person situated in the transcendental position above the three material modes, he was attracted to this transcendental *rasa* of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is adored by liberated souls who sing Vedic hymns. The Supreme Lord's pastimes are more attractive to liberated souls than to mundane people. He is of necessity not impersonal because it is only possible to carry on transcendental *rasa* with a person.
6. In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* the transcendental pastimes of the Lord are narrated, and the narration is systematically depicted by Śrīla Śukadeva

Gosvāmī. Thus the subject matter is appealing to all classes of persons, including those who seek liberation to relish the humor of becoming one with the supreme whole.

7. In Sanskrit the parrot is also known as *śuka*. When a ripened fruit is cut by the red beaks of such birds, its sweet flavor is enhanced. The Vedic fruit which is mature and ripe in knowledge is spoken through the lips of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who is compared to the parrot not for his ability to recite the *Bhāgavatam* exactly as he heard it from his learned father, but for his ability to present the work in a manner that would appeal to all classes of men.
8. The subject matter is so presented through the lips of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī that any sincere listener who hears submissively can at once relish transcendental tastes which are distinct from the perverted tastes of the material world. The ripened fruit is not dropped all of a sudden from the highest planet of Kṛṣṇaloka. Rather, it has come down carefully through the chain of disciplic succession without change or disturbance.
9. Foolish people who are not in the transcendental disciplic succession commit great blunders by trying to understand the highest transcendental *rasa*, known as the *rāsa* dance, without following in the footsteps of Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who presents this fruit very carefully by stages of transcendental realization. One should be intelligent enough to know the position of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by considering personalities like Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who deals with the subject so carefully.
10. This process of disciplic succession of the *Bhāgavata* school suggests that in the future also, for all time, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* has to be understood from a person who is factually a representative of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.
11. One should conclude, therefore, that the serious student of *rasa* should receive the message of the *Bhāgavatam* in the chain of disciplic succession from Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, who describes the *Bhāgavatam* from its very beginning and not whimsically to satisfy the mundane who has very little knowledge in transcendental science. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is so carefully presented that a sincere and serious person can at once enjoy the ripened fruit of Vedic knowledge simply by drinking the nectarean juice through the mouth of Śukadeva Gosvāmī or his bona fide representative.

TEXT 4

नैमिषेऽनिमिषक्षेत्रे ऋषयः शौनकादयः ।

सत्रं स्वर्गायलोकाय सहस्रसममासत ॥ ४ ॥

naimiṣe 'nimiṣa-kṣetre
ṛṣayah śaunakādayah
satram svargāya lokāya
sahasra-samam āsata

SYNONYMS

naimiṣe—in the forest known as Naimiṣāraṇya; *animiṣa-kṣetra*—the spot which is especially a favorite of Viṣṇu (who does not close His eyelids); *ṛṣayah*—sages; *śaunaka-ādayah*—headed by the sage Śaunaka; *satram*—sacrifice; *svargāya*—the Lord who is glorified in heaven; *lokāya*—and for the devotees who are always in touch with the Lord; *sahasra*—one thousand; *samam*—years; *āsata*—performed.

TRANSLATION

Once, in a holy place in the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya, great sages headed by the sage Śaunaka assembled to perform a great thousand-year sacrifice for the satisfaction of the Lord and His devotees.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, after its first recitation by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, was repeated for the second time at Naimiṣāraṇya.
2. In the *Vāyavīya Tantra*, it is said that Brahmā, the engineer of this particular universe, contemplated a great wheel which could enclose the universe. The hub of this great circle was fixed at a particular place known as Naimiṣāraṇya. Similarly, there is another reference to the forest of Naimiṣāraṇya in the *Varāha Purāṇa*, where it is stated that by performance of sacrifice at this place, the strength of demoniac people is

curtailed. Thus *brāhmaṇas* prefer Naimiṣāranya for such sacrificial performances.

3. The devotees of Lord Viṣṇu offer all kinds of sacrifices for His pleasure. The devotees are always attached to the service of the Lord, whereas fallen souls are attached to the pleasures of material existence. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, it is said that anything performed in the material world for any reason other than for the pleasure of Lord Viṣṇu causes further bondage for the performer. It is enjoined therefore that all acts must be performed sacrificially for the satisfaction of Viṣṇu and His devotees. This will bring everyone peace and prosperity.

TEXT 5

त एकदा तु मुनयः प्रातर्हृतहुताग्नयः ।

सत्कृतं सूतमासीनं पप्रच्छुरिदमादरात् ॥ ५ ॥

*ta ekadā tu munayah
prātar huta-hutāgnayah
sat-kṛtam sūtam āśīnam
papracchur idam ādarāt*

SYNOMYMS

te—the sages; *ekadā*—one day; *tu*—but; *munayah*—sages; *prātaḥ*—morning; *huta*—burning; *huta-agnayah*—the sacrificial fire; *sat-kṛtam*—due respects; *sūtam*—Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī; *āśīnam*—seated on; *papracchuh*—made inquiries; *idam*—on this (as follows); *ādarāt*—with due regards.

TRANSLATION

One day, after finishing their morning duties by burning a sacrificial fire and offering a seat of esteem to Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī, the great sages made inquiries, with great respect, about the following matters.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Morning is the best time to hold spiritual services. The great sages offered the speaker of the *Bhāgavatam* an elevated seat of respect called the *vyāsāsana*, or the seat of Śrī Vyāsadeva.
2. Śrī Vyāsadeva is the original spiritual preceptor for all men. And all other preceptors are considered to be his representatives. A representative is one who can exactly present the viewpoint of Śrī Vyāsadeva. Śrī Vyāsadeva impregnated the message of the *Bhāgavatam* unto Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī heard it from him (Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī).
3. All bona fide representatives of Śrī Vyāsadeva in the chain of disciplic succession are to be understood to be *gosvāmīs*. These *gosvāmīs* restrain all their senses, and they stick to the path made by the previous *ācāryas*. The *gosvāmīs* do not deliver lectures on the *Bhāgavatam* capriciously. Rather, they execute their services most carefully, following their predecessors, who delivered the spiritual message unbroken to them.
4. Those who listen to the *Bhāgavatam* may put questions to the speaker in order to elicit the clear meaning, but this should not be done in a challenging spirit. One must submit questions with great regard for the speaker and the subject matter. This is also the way recommended in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. One must learn the transcendental subject by submissive aural reception from the right sources. Therefore these sages addressed the speaker Sūta Gosvāmī with great respect.

TEXT 6

ऋषय ऊचुः त्वया खलु पुराणानि सेतिहासानि चानघ ।

आरव्यातान्यप्यधीतानि धर्मशास्त्राणि यान्युत ॥ ६ ॥

ṛṣaya ūcuḥ
 tvayā khalu purāṇāni
 setihāsāni cānagha
 ākhyātāny apy adhītāni
 dharma-śāstrāṇi yāny uta

SYNOMYMS

r̥ṣayah—the sages; *ūcuh*—said; *tvayā*—by you; *khalu*—undoubtedly; *purāṇāni*—the supplements to the *Vedas* with illustrative narrations; *satiḥāsāni*—along with the histories; *ca*—and; *anagha*—freed from all vices; *ākhyātāni*—explained; *api*—although; *adhītāni*—well read; *dharma-śāstrāni*—scriptures giving right directions to progressive life; *yāni*—all these; *uta*—said.

TRANSLATION

The sages said: Respected Sūta Gosvāmī, you are completely free from all vice. You are well versed in all the scriptures famous for religious life, and in the Purāṇas and the histories as well, for you have gone through them under proper guidance and have also explained them.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. A *gosvāmī*, or the bona fide representative of Śrī Vyāsadeva, must be free from all kinds of vices. The four major vices are (1) illicit connection with women, (2) animal slaughter, (3) intoxication, (4) speculative gambling of all sorts. A *gosvāmī* must be free from all these vices before he can dare sit on the *vyāsāsana*.
2. No one should be allowed to sit on the *vyāsāsana* who is not spotless in character and who is not freed from the above-mentioned vices. He should not only be freed from all such vices but must also be well versed in all revealed scriptures, or the *Vedas*. The *Purāṇas* are also parts of the *Vedas*. And histories like the *Mahābhārata* or *Rāmāyaṇa* are also parts of the *Vedas*. The *ācārya* or the *gosvāmī* must be well acquainted with all these literatures.
3. Hearing is called *śravaṇa*, and explaining is called *kīrtana*. The two processes of *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* are of primary importance to progressive spiritual life. Only one who has properly grasped the transcendental knowledge from the right source by submissive hearing can properly explain the subject.

TEXT 7

यानि वेदविदां श्रेष्ठो भगवान् बादरायणः ।

अन्ये च मुनयः सूत परावरविदो विदुः ॥ ७ ॥

*yāni veda-vidām śreṣṭhaḥ
bhagavān bādarāyaṇaḥ
anye ca munayah sūta
parāvara-vido viduh*

SYNONYMS

yāni—all that; *veda-vidām*—scholars of the *Vedas*; *śreṣṭhaḥ*—seniormost; *bhagavān*—incarnation of Godhead; *bādarāyaṇaḥ*—*Vyāsadeva*; *anye*—others; *ca*—and; *munayah*—the sages; *sūta*—O *Sūta Gosvāmī*; *parā-vara-vidah*—the learned scholars who are conversant with physical and metaphysical knowledge; *viduh*—one who knows.

TRANSLATION

Being the eldest learned Vedāntist, O *Sūta Gosvāmī*, you are acquainted with the knowledge of *Vyāsadeva*, who is the incarnation of Godhead, and you also know other sages who are fully versed in all kinds of physical and metaphysical knowledge.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is a natural commentary on the *Brahma-sūtra*, or the *Bādarāyaṇi Vedānta-sūtras*. It is called natural because *Vyāsadeva* is author of both the *Vedānta-sūtras* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, or the essence of all Vedic literatures. Besides *Vyāsadeva*, there are other sages who are the authors of six different philosophical systems, namely *Gautama*, *Kaṇāda*, *Kapila*, *Patañjali*, *Jaimini* and *Aṣṭāvakra*. Theism is explained completely in the *Vedānta-sūtra*, whereas in other systems of philosophical speculations, practically no mention is given to the ultimate cause of all causes.

2. One can sit on the *vyāsāsana* only after being conversant in all systems of philosophy so that one can present fully the theistic views of the *Bhāgavatam* in defiance of all other systems. Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī was the proper teacher, and therefore the sages at Naimiṣāraṇya elevated him to the *vyāsāsana*. Śrīla Vyāsadeva is designated herein as the Personality of Godhead because he is the authorized empowered incarnation.

TEXT 8

वेत्थ त्वं सौम्य तत्सर्वं तत्त्वतस्तदनुग्रहात् ।

ब्रूयुः स्निग्धस्य शिष्यस्य गुरवो गुह्यमप्युत ॥ ८ ॥

*vettha tvam saumya tat sarvam
tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta*

SYNOMYS

vettha—you are well conversant; *tvam*—Your Honor; *saumya*—one who is pure and simple; *tat*—those; *sarvam*—all; *tattvataḥ*—in fact; *tat*—their; *anugrahāt*—by the favor of; *brūyuh*—will tell; *snigdhasya*—of the one who is submissive; *śiṣyasya*—of the disciple; *guravah*—the spiritual masters; *guhyam*—secret; *api* *uta*—endowed with.

TRANSLATION

And because you are submissive, your spiritual masters have endowed you with all the favors bestowed upon a gentle disciple. Therefore, you can tell us all that you have scientifically learned from them.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The secret of success in spiritual life is in satisfying the spiritual master and thereby getting his sincere blessings. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has sung in his famous eight stanzas on the spiritual master as follows: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto the lotus feet of my spiritual

master. Only by his satisfaction can one please the Personality of Godhead, and when he is dissatisfied there is only havoc on the path of spiritual realization." It is essential, therefore, that a disciple be very much obedient and submissive to the bona fide spiritual master.

2. Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī fulfilled all these qualifications as a disciple, and therefore he was endowed with all favors by his learned and self-realized spiritual masters such as Śrīla Vyāsadeva and others. The sages of Naimiṣāranya were confident that Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī was bona fide. Therefore they were anxious to hear from him.

TEXT 9

तत्र तत्राञ्जसायुष्मन् भवता यद्विनिश्चितम् ।

पुंसामेकान्ततः श्रेयस्तत्रः शांसितुमर्हसि ॥ ९ ॥

*tatra tatrāñjasāyuṣman
bhavatā yad viniścitam
puṁsām ekāntataḥ śreyas
tan nah śāṁsitum arhasi*

SYNONYMS

tatra—thereof; *tatra*—thereof; *añjasā*—made easy; *āyuṣman*—blessed with a long duration of life; *bhavatā*—by your good self; *yat*—whatever; *viniścitam*—ascertained; *puṁsām*—for the people in general; *ekāntataḥ*—absolutely; *śreyah*—ultimate good; *tat*—that; *nah*—to us; *śāṁsitum*—to explain; *arhasi*—deserve.

TRANSLATION

Question 1: Please, therefore, being blessed with many years, explain to us, in an easily understandable way, what you have ascertained to be the absolute and ultimate good for the people in general.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The *ācāryas* and *gosvāmīs* are always absorbed in thought of the well-being of the general public, especially their spiritual well-being. Spiritual well-being is automatically followed by material well-being.
2. The *ācāryas* therefore give directions in spiritual well-being for people in general. Foreseeing the incompetencies of the people in this Age of Kali, or the iron age of quarrel, the sages requested that Sūta Gosvāmī give a summary of all revealed scriptures because the people of this age are condemned in every respect. The sages, therefore, inquired of the absolute good, which is the ultimate good for the people. The condemned state of affairs of the people of this age is described as follows.

TEXT 10

प्रायेणात्पायुषः सभ्य कलावस्मिन् युगे जनाः ।

मन्दाः सुमन्दमतयो मन्दभाग्या ह्युपद्रुताः ॥ १० ॥

*prāyeṇālpāyusah sabhya
 kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
 mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
 manda-bhāgyāḥ hy upadrutāḥ*

SYNOMYS

prāyenā—almost always; *alpa*—meager; *āyuṣah*—duration of life; *sabhya*—member of a learned society; *kalau*—in this Age of Kali (quarrel); *asmin*—herein; *yuge*—age; *janāḥ*—the public; *mandāḥ*—lazy; *sumanda-matayah*—misguided; *manda-bhāgyāḥ*—unlucky; *hi*—and above all; *upadrutāḥ*—disturbed.

TRANSLATION

O learned one, in this iron Age of Kali men almost always have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always

disturbed.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. In this age, men are victims not only of different political creeds and parties, but also of many different types of sense-gratificatory diversions, such as cinemas, sports, gambling, clubs, mundane libraries, bad association, smoking, drinking, cheating, pilfering, bickerings, and so on. Their minds are always disturbed and full of anxieties due to so many different engagements.
2. In this age, many unscrupulous men manufacture their own religious faiths, which are not based on any revealed scriptures, and very often people who are addicted to sense gratification are attracted by such institutions. Consequently, in the name of religion so many sinful acts are being carried on that the people in general have neither peace of mind nor health of body.
3. The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya are anxious to disentangle all fallen souls, and here they are seeking the remedy from Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī.

TEXT 11

भूरीणि भूरिकर्माणि श्रोतव्यानि विभागशः ।

अतः साधोऽत्र यत्सारं समुद्धृत्य मनीषया ।

ब्रूहि भद्रायभूतानां येनात्मा सुप्रसीदति ॥ ११ ॥

*bhūrīṇi bhūri-karmāṇi
 śrotavyāni vibhāgaśah
 ataḥ sādho 'tra yat sāram
 samuddhṛtya manīṣayā
 brūhi bhadrāya bhūtānāṁ
 yenātmā suprasīdati*

SYNOMYMS

bhūrīṇi—multifarious; *bhūri*—many; *karmāṇi*—duties; *śrotavyāni*—to be

learned; *vibhāgaśah*—by divisions of subject matter; *ataḥ*—therefore; *sādho*—O sage; *atra*—herein; *yat*—whatever; *sāram*—essence; *samuḍḍhṛtya*—by selection; *manīṣayā*—to the best of your knowledge; *brūhi*—please tell us; *bhadrāya*—for the good of; *bhūtānām*—the living beings; *yena*—by which; *ātmā*—the self; *suprasīdati*—becomes fully satisfied.

TRANSLATION

Question 2: There are many varieties of scriptures, and in all of them there are many prescribed duties, which can be learned only after many years of study in their various divisions. Therefore, O sage, please select the essence of all these scriptures and explain it for the good of all living beings, so that by such instruction their hearts may be fully satisfied.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. There are many varieties of approaches which are recommended for different types of living beings in different times and at different places. Consequently, the numbers of revealed scriptures are innumerable. There are different methods and prescribed duties recommended in these various scriptures. Taking into consideration the fallen condition of the people in general in this Age of Kali, the sages of Naimisāraṇya suggested that Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī relate the essence of all such scriptures because in this age it is not possible for the fallen souls to understand and undergo all the lessons of all these various scriptures in a *varṇa* and *āśrama* system.

TEXT 12

सूत जानासि भद्रं ते भगवान् सात्वतां पतिः ।

देवक्यां वसुदेवस्य जातो यस्य चिकीर्षया ॥ १२ ॥

*sūta jānāsi bhadram te
 bhagavān sātvatāṁ patiḥ
 devakyāṁ vasudevasya
 jāto yasya cikīrṣayā*

SYNOMYS

sūta—O Sūta Gosvāmī; *jānāsi*—you know; *bhadram te*—all blessings upon you; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *sātvatām*—of the pure devotees; *patih*—the protector; *devakyām*—in the womb of Devakī; *vasudevasya*—by Vasudeva; *jātah*—born of; *yasya*—for the purpose of; *cikīrṣayā*—executing.

TRANSLATION

Question 3: All blessings upon you, O Sūta Gosvāmī. You know for what purpose the Personality of Godhead appeared in the womb of Devakī as the son of Vasudeva.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. *Sat* means the Absolute Truth. And persons who are servitors of the Absolute Truth are called *sātvatas*. And the Personality of Godhead who protects such pure devotees is known as the protector of the *sātvatas*.
2. *Bhadram te*, or "blessings upon you," indicates the sages' anxiety to know the Absolute Truth from the speaker. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, appeared to Devakī, the wife of Vasudeva. Vasudeva is the symbol of the transcendental position wherein the appearance of the Supreme Lord takes place.

TEXT 13

तत्रः शुश्रूषमाणानामर्हस्यरानुवर्णितुम् ।

यस्यावतारो भूतानां क्षेमाय च भवाय च ॥ १३ ॥

*tan nah śuśrūṣamāṇānām
 arhasy aṅgānuvarṇitum
 yasyāvatāro bhūtānām
 kṣemāya ca bhavāya ca*

SYNOMYS

tat—those; *nah*—unto us; *śuśrūṣamāṇānām*—those who are endeavoring for;

arhasi—ought to do it; *aṅga*—O Sūta Gosvāmī; *anuvarṇitum*—to explain by following in the footsteps of previous ācāryas; *yasya*—whose; *avatāraḥ*—incarnation; *bhūtānām*—of the living beings; *kṣemāya*—for good; *ca*—and; *bhavāya*—upliftment; *ca*—and.

TRANSLATION

O Sūta Gosvāmī, we are eager to learn about the Personality of Godhead and His incarnations. Please explain to us those teachings imparted by previous masters [ācāryas], for one is uplifted both by speaking them and by hearing them.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The conditions for hearing the transcendental message of the Absolute Truth are set forth herein. The first condition is that the audience must be very sincere and eager to hear. And the speaker must be in the line of disciplic succession from the recognized ācārya.
2. In the case of Sūta Gosvāmī and the sages of Naimiśāraṇya, all these conditions are fulfilled because Śrīla Sūta Gosvāmī is in the line of Śrīla Vyāsadeva and because the sages of Naimiśāraṇya are all sincere souls who are anxious to learn the truth. Thus the transcendental topics of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa's superhuman activities, His incarnation, His birth, appearance or disappearance, His forms, His names and so on are all easily understandable because all requirements are fulfilled. Such discourses help all men on the path of spiritual realization.

TEXT 14

आपन्नः संसृतिं घोरां यन्नाम विवशो गृणन् ।

ततः सद्यो विमुच्येत यद्भिरेति स्वयं भयम् ॥ १४ ॥

āpannah saṁsṛtim ghorām
yan-nāma vivaśo gṛṇan
tataḥ sadyo vimucyeta
yad bibheti svayam bhayam

SYNOMYMS

āpannah—being entangled; *samsṛtim*—in the hurdle of birth and death; *ghorām*—too complicated; *yat*—what; *nāma*—the absolute name; *vivasah*—unconsciously; *gṛṇan*—chanting; *tataḥ*—from that; *sadyah*—at once; *vimucyeta*—gets freedom; *yat*—that which; *bibheti*—fears; *svayam*—personally; *bhayam*—fear itself.

TRANSLATION

Saunaka Rishi: Living beings who are entangled in the complicated meshes of birth and death can be freed immediately by even unconsciously chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, which is feared by fear personified.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Vāsudeva, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Personality of Godhead, is the supreme controller of everything, and as such He is feared by all others. There is no one in creation who is not afraid of the rage of the Almighty. Great *asuras* like Rāvaṇa, Hiraṇyakaśipu, Kamsa and others, who were very powerful living entities, were all killed by the Personality of Godhead.
2. And the almighty Vāsudeva has empowered His name with the powers of His personal Self. Everything directly related to Him is identical with Him. It is stated herein that the name of Kṛṣṇa is feared even by fear personified. This indicates that the name of Kṛṣṇa is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, the name of Kṛṣṇa is as powerful as Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. There is no difference at all. Anyone, therefore, can take advantage of the holy names of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa even in the midst of the greatest dangers.
3. The transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa, even though uttered unconsciously or by force of circumstances, can help one obtain freedom from the hurdle of birth and death.

TEXT 15

यत्पादसंश्रयाः सूत मुनयः प्रशमायनाः ।

सद्यः पुनन्त्युपस्पृष्टाः स्वर्धुन्यापोऽनुसेवया ॥ १५ ॥

*yat-pāda-samśrayāḥ sūta
munayah praśamāyanāḥ
sadyah punanty upasprṣṭāḥ
svardhuny-āpo 'nusevayā*

SYNONYMS

yat—whose; *pāda*—lotus feet; *samśrayāḥ*—those who have taken shelter of; *sūta*—O Sūta Gosvāmī; *munayah*—great sages; *praśamāyanāḥ*—absorbed in devotion to the Supreme; *sadyah*—at once; *punanti*—sanctify; *upasprṣṭāḥ*—simply by association; *svardhunī*—of the sacred Ganges; *āpaḥ*—water; *anusevayā*—bringing into use.

TRANSLATION

O Sūta, those great sages who have completely taken shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord can at once sanctify those who come in touch with them, whereas the waters of the Ganges can sanctify only after prolonged use.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Pure devotees of the Lord are more powerful than the waters of the sacred river Ganges. One can derive spiritual benefit out of prolonged use of the Ganges waters. But one can be sanctified at once by the mercy of a pure devotee of the Lord.
2. To take shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord means to take shelter of the pure devotees. Anyone, therefore, who takes shelter of the lotus feet of a pure devotee by accepting the pure devotee as his spiritual master can be at once purified. Such devotees of the Lord are honored equally with the Lord because they are engaged in the most confidential service of the Lord, for they deliver out of the material world the fallen souls, whom the

Lord wants to return home, back to Godhead. Such pure devotees are better known as vice-lords, according to revealed scriptures.

3. The sincere disciples of a pure devotee consider him equal with the Lord, but the pure devotee always considers himself to be a humble servant of the servant of the Lord [Cc. Madhya 13.80]. This is the pure devotional path.

TEXT 16

को वा भगवतस्तस्य पुण्यश्लोकेऽयकर्मणः ।

शुद्धिकामो न शृणुयाद्यशः कलिमलापहम् ॥ १६ ॥

*ko vā bhagavatas tasya
puṇya-ślokedya-karmaṇah
śuddhi-kāmo na śṛṇuyād
yaśah kali-malāpaham*

SYNONYMS

kah—who; *vā*—rather; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Lord; *tasya*—His; *puṇya*—virtuous; *śloka-īḍya*—worshipable by prayers; *karmaṇah*—deeds; *śuddhi-kāmaḥ*—desiring deliverance from all sins; *na*—not; *śṛṇuyāt*—does hear; *yaśah*—glories; *kali*—of the age of quarrel; *mala-apaham*—the agent for sanctification.

TRANSLATION

Who is there, desiring deliverance from the vices of the age of quarrel, who is not willing to hear the virtuous glories of the Lord?

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The Age of Kali is the most condemned age due to its quarrelsome features. Kali-yuga is so saturated with vicious habits that there is a great fight at the slightest misunderstanding. Those who are engaged in the pure devotional service of the Lord, who are without any desire for self-

aggrandizement, and who are freed from the effects of fruitive actions and dry philosophical speculations are capable of getting out of the estrangements of this complicated age.

2. The leaders of the people are very much anxious to live in peace and friendship, but they have no information of the simple method of hearing the glories of the Lord. If we want actual peace, we must open the road to understanding of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and glorify Him for His virtuous activities as they are depicted in the pages of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

TEXT 17

तस्य कर्माण्युदाराणि परिगीतानि सूरभिः ।

ब्रूहि नः श्रद्धानानां लीलया दधतः कलाः ॥ १७ ॥

*tasya karmāṇy udārāṇi
parigītāni sūribhiḥ
brūhi naḥ śraddadhānānām
līlayā dadhataḥ kalāḥ*

SYNOMYS

tasya—His; *karmāṇi*—transcendental acts; *udārāṇi*—magnanimous; *parigītāni*—broadcast; *sūribhiḥ*—by the great souls; *brūhi*—please speak; *naḥ*—unto us; *śraddadhānānām*—ready to receive with respect; *līlayā*—pastimes; *dadhataḥ*—adverted; *kalāḥ*—incarnations.

TRANSLATION

Question 4: His transcendental acts are magnificent and gracious, and great learned sages like Nārada sing of them. Please, therefore, speak to us, who are eager to hear, about the adventures He performs in His various incarnations.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The Personality of Godhead is never inactive as some less intelligent persons suggest. His works are magnificent and magnanimous. His

creations both material and spiritual are all wonderful and contain all variegatedness. They are described nicely by such liberated souls as Śrīla Nārada, Vyāsa, Vālmīki, Devala, Asita, Madhva, Śrī Caitanya, Rāmānuja, Viṣṇu Svāmī, Nimbārka, Śrīdhara, Viśvanātha, Baladeva, Bhaktivinoda, Siddhānta Sarasvatī and many other learned and self-realized souls.

2. Those who are not conversant with the activities of the Lord and His transcendental realm are sometimes favored by the Lord in His adventures as incarnations, wherein He displays the eternal bliss of His association in the transcendental realm. By such activities He attracts the conditioned souls of the material world.
3. As the supreme controller of both the material and spiritual worlds, the Lord has different incarnations of unlimited categories. Incarnations like Brahmā, Rudra, Manu, Pṛthu and Vyāsa are His material qualitative incarnations, but His incarnations like Rāma, Narasimha, Varāha and Vāmana are His transcendental incarnations. Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all incarnations, and He is therefore the cause of all causes.

TEXT 18

अथारव्याहि हरेर्धीमन्नवतारकथाः शुभाः ।

लीला विदधतः स्वैरमीश्वरस्यात्ममायया ॥ १८ ॥

*athākhyāhi harer dhīmann
avatāra-kathāḥ śubhāḥ
līlā vidadhataḥ svairam
īśvarasyātma-māyayā*

SYNOMYMS

atha—therefore; *ākhyāhi*—describe; *hareḥ*—of the Lord; *dhīman*—O sagacious one; *avatāra*—incarnations; *kathāḥ*—narratives; *śubhāḥ*—auspicious; *līlā*—adventures; *vidadhataḥ*—performed; *svairam*—pastimes; *īśvarasya*—of the supreme controller; *ātma*—personal; *māyayā*—energies.

TRANSLATION

Question 5: O wise Sūta, please narrate to us the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Godhead's multi-incarnations. Such auspicious adventures and pastimes of the Lord, the supreme controller, are performed by His internal powers.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. For the creation, maintenance and destruction of the material worlds, the Supreme Lord Personality of Godhead Himself appears in many thousands of forms of incarnations, and the specific adventures found in those transcendental forms are all-auspicious.
2. Both those who are present during such activities and those who hear the transcendental narrations of such activities are benefited.

TEXT 19

वयं तु न वितृप्याम उत्तमश्लोकविक्रमे ।

यच्छृण्वतां रसज्ञानां स्वादु स्वादु पदे पदे ॥ १९ ॥

*vayam tu na vitṛpyāma
 uttama-śloka-vikrame
 yac-chṛṇvatām rasa-jñānām
 svādu svādu pade pade*

SYNONYMS

vayam—we; *tu*—but; *na*—not; *vitṛpyāmaḥ*—shall be at rest; *uttama-śloka*—the Personality of Godhead, who is glorified by transcendental prayers; *vikrame*—adventures; *yat*—which; *śṛṇvatām*—by continuous hearing; *rasa*—humor; *jñānām*—those who are conversant with; *svādu*—relishing; *svādu*—palatable; *pade pade*—at every step.

TRANSLATION

We never tire of hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Personality of Godhead, who is glorified by hymns and prayers. Those who have developed a taste for transcendental relationships with Him relish hearing His pastimes at every moment.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. There is a great difference between mundane stories, fiction, or history and the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. The histories of the whole universe contain references to the pastimes of the incarnations of the Lord.
2. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, the *Mahābhārata*, and the *Purāṇas* are histories of bygone ages recorded in connection with the pastimes of the incarnations of the Lord and therefore remain fresh even after repeated readings.

TEXT 20

कृतवान् किल कर्माणि सह रामेण केशवः ।

अतिमर्त्यानि भगवान् गूढः कपटमानुषः ॥ २० ॥

*kṛtavān kila karmāṇi
 saha rāmeṇa keśavaḥ
 atimartyāni bhagavān
 gūḍhaḥ kapaṭa-mānuṣaḥ*

SYNONYMS

kṛtavān—done by; *kila*—what; *karmāṇi*—acts; *saha*—along with; *rāmeṇa*—Balarāma; *keśavaḥ*—Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *atimartyāni*—superhuman; *bhagavān*—the Personality of Godhead; *gūḍhaḥ*—masked as; *kapaṭa*—apparently; *mānuṣaḥ*—human being.

TRANSLATION

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead, along with Balarāma, played like a human being, and so masked He performed many superhuman acts.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. In the *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Lord says that His birth and deeds are transcendental and that anyone who is so fortunate as to know the transcendental nature of His birth and deeds will at once become liberated and eligible to return to the kingdom of God. So knowledge of the transcendental nature of the birth and deeds of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is sufficient for liberation.
2. In the *Bhāgavatam*, the transcendental nature of the Lord is described in nine cantos, and in the Tenth Canto His specific pastimes are taken up. All this becomes known as one's reading of this literature progresses. It is important to note here, however, that the Lord exhibited His divinity even from the lap of His mother, that His deeds are all superhuman (He lifted Govardhana Hill at the age of seven), and that all these acts definitely prove Him to be actually the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Yet, due to His mystic covering, He was always accepted as an ordinary human child by His so-called father and mother and other relatives.
3. Whenever some herculean task was performed by Him, the father and mother took it otherwise. And they remained satisfied with unflinching parental love for their son. As such, the sages of Naimiśāraṇya describe Him as apparently resembling a human being, but actually He is the supreme almighty Personality of Godhead.

TEXT 21

कलिमागतमाज्ञाय क्षेत्रेऽस्मिन् वैष्णवे वयम् ।

आसीना दीर्घसत्रेण कथायां सक्षणा हरेः ॥ २१ ॥

*kalim āgatam ājñāya
kṣetre 'smiṇ् vaiṣṇave vayam*

*āśinā dīrgha-satreṇa
kathāyāṁ sakṣaṇā hareḥ*

SYNONYMS

kalim—the Age of Kali (iron age of quarrel); *āgatam*—having arrived; *ājñāya*—knowing this; *kṣetre*—in this tract of land; *asmin*—in this; *vaiṣṇave*—specially meant for the devotee of the Lord; *vayam*—we; *āśināḥ*—seated; *dīrgha*—prolonged; *satreṇa*—for performance of sacrifices; *kathāyām*—in the words of; *sa-kṣaṇāḥ*—with time at our disposal; *hareḥ*—of the Personality of Godhead.

TRANSLATION

Knowing well that the Age of Kali has already begun, we are assembled here in this holy place to hear at great length the transcendental message of Godhead and in this way perform sacrifice.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. In the Kali-yuga, the maximum duration of life being one hundred years only, and that combined with various difficulties, the recommended process of self-realization is that of hearing and chanting of the holy name, fame, and pastimes of the Lord.
2. The sages of Naimiṣāraṇya began this process in a place meant specifically for the devotees of the Lord. They prepared themselves to hear the pastimes of the Lord over a period of one thousand years. By the example of these sages one should learn that regular hearing and recitation of the *Bhāgavatam* is the only way for self-realization. Other attempts are simply a waste of time, for they do not give any tangible results.
3. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu preached this system of *Bhāgavata-dharma*, and He recommended that all those who were born in India should take the responsibility of broadcasting the messages of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, primarily the message of the *bhagavad-gītā*. And when one is well established in the teachings of the *Bhagavad-gītā*, he can take up the study of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* for further enlightenment in self-realization.

TEXT 22

त्वं नः सन्दर्शितो धात्रा दुस्तरं निस्तिर्षिताम् ।
कलिं सत्त्वहरं पुंसां कर्णधार इवार्णवम् ॥ २२ ॥

*tvam naḥ sandarśito dhātrā
 dustaram nistitīrṣatām
 kalim sattva-haram pum̄sām
 karṇa-dhāra ivārṇavam*

SYNONYMS

tvam—Your Goodness; *naḥ*—unto us; *sandarśitah*—meeting; *dhātrā*—by providence; *dustaram*—insurmountable; *nistitīrṣatām*—for those desiring to cross over; *kalim*—the Age of Kali; *sattva-haram*—that which deteriorates the good qualities; *pum̄sām*—of a man; *karṇa-dhārah*—captain; *iva*—as; *arṇavam*—the ocean.

TRANSLATION

We think that we have met Your Goodness by the will of providence, just so that we may accept you as captain of the ship for those who desire to cross the difficult ocean of Kali, which deteriorates all the good qualities of a human being.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. The Age of Kali is very dangerous for the human being. Human life is simply meant for self-realization, but due to this dangerous age, men have completely forgotten the aim of life. In this age, the life span will gradually decrease. People will gradually lose their memory, finer sentiments, strength, and better qualities.
2. A list of the anomalies for this age is given in the Twelfth Canto of this work. And so this age is very difficult for those who want to utilize this life for self-realization. The people are so busy with sense gratification

that they completely forget about self-realization. Out of madness they frankly say that there is no need for self-realization because they do not realize that this brief life is but a moment on our great journey towards self-realization.

3. Learned men, therefore, must be cautious of this age, and if they at all want to cross over the dangerous ocean of Kali, they must follow the footsteps of the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya and accept Śrī Sūta Gosvāmī or his bona fide representative as the captain of the ship. The ship is the message of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the shape of the *Bhagavad-gītā* or the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

TEXT 23

ब्रूहि योगेश्वरे कृष्णे ब्रह्मण्ये धर्मवर्मणि ।

स्वां काष्ठामधुनोपेते धर्मः कं शरणं गतः ॥ २३ ॥

*brūhi yogeśvare kṛṣṇe
brahmaṇye dharma-varmaṇi
svāṁ kāṣṭhām adhunopete
dharmah kam śaraṇam gataḥ*

SYNOMYMS

brūhi—please tell; *yoga-īśvare*—the Lord of all mystic powers; *kṛṣṇe*—Lord Kṛṣṇa; *brahmaṇye*—the Absolute Truth; *dharma*—religion; *varmaṇi*—protector; *svām*—own; *kāṣṭhām*—abode; *adhunā*—nowadays; *upete*—having gone away; *dharmah*—religion; *kam*—unto whom; *śaraṇam*—shelter; *gataḥ*—gone.

TRANSLATION

Question 6: Since Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, the master of all mystic powers, has departed for His own abode, please tell us to whom the religious principles have now gone for shelter.

IMPORTANT POINTS

1. Religion consists of the prescribed codes enunciated by the Personality of Godhead Himself. Whenever there is gross misuse or neglect of the principles of religion, the Supreme Lord appears Himself to restore religious principles. This is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8). Here the sages of Naimiṣāraṇya are inquiring about these principles.
2. The reply to this question is given later: The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the transcendental sound representation of the Personality of Godhead, and thus it is the full representation of transcendental knowledge and religious principles.